

NEWS RELEASE

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SBA ADMINISTRATOR NAMES MISSOURI ENTREPRENEUR NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

New York and Arizona Are Runners-Up

WASHINGTON – A St. Louis, Missouri entrepreneur is the National Small Business Person of the Year. Aída Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), today named Gregory A. Sullivan, president and chief executive officer of G. A. Sullivan, winner of the 36th annual entrepreneurial award. Mr. Sullivan was selected from a field of 53 state small business persons of the year winners representing the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. His firm is a leader in software development services and information technology.

“Greg Sullivan is an exceptional example of the true spirit of entrepreneurship,” SBA Administrator Alvarez said. He started his company with very little money, worked hard, overcame tremendous challenges and today, he runs a \$14 million dollar business that employs 175 people. It’s the success of people like Greg and all the small business persons of the year that makes me proud of the work that the SBA does to help entrepreneurs.”

First runner-up in the national competition went to **Rolf H. Mueller, president of FOSTEC, Inc. located in Auburn, N.Y.** FOSTEC designs, manufactures and engineers fiber optic lighting systems.

Second runner-up is **Joanne Carthey, president and chief executive officer of NetPro in Scottsdale, Ariz.** NetPro is the leading provider of directory services management solutions designed to enable customers to reduce administrative costs, minimize network downtime and optimize resources.

The national entrepreneur awards are a highlight of SBA’s national Small Business Week celebration, May 23-29. Small Business Week, now in its 36th year, honors the contributions of the nation’s small business owners. Winners are selected on their record of stability, growth in employment and sales, sound financial status, innovation, and the company’s response to adversity and community service. Involvement with SBA is *not* a selection criteria, though roughly three-fourths of the winners received financial or management assistance from SBA at some point.

Mr. Sullivan founded G. A. Sullivan in 1982 with just \$300 in start-up capital. He decided to start his business after his first employer closed just a few months after he joined the company. As a result of a tremendous amount of risk and hard work, G. A. Sullivan now boasts a five-year revenue growth rate of more than 1,400 percent and employs nearly 175 people. Sales in 1998 were about \$14 million.

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In addition to its St. Louis facility, the firm also has offices in Kansas City (Overland Park), Cincinnati, and Nashville. For two consecutive years, G. A. Sullivan ranked on *Inc.* magazine's list of the 500 fastest-growing, privately-held companies in America. An author of several best-selling technical publications, Mr. Sullivan is also very active in the community through volunteer assistance and fundraising activities.

• **FIRST RUNNER-UP: FOSTEC, Inc. was founded in 1987 with six employees. By its 10th anniversary year, the company had grown to more than 90 employees with more than \$11 million in sales. Today, FOSTEC offers 225 standard products and components and has more than 15 distributors serving customers worldwide with a complete line of light sources, fiber optic products and light transfer applications. In 1992, FOSTEC appeared on the *Inc.* magazine list of America's top 500 fastest-growing companies.**

FOSTEC President Rolf Mueller attributes his success to the personal interest he takes in every aspect of the organization. Mr. Mueller's goal for the company is to be the industry's most respected manufacturer, produce the highest quality fiber optic products, and create a company where innovation and service are as important as quality.

• **SECOND RUNNER-UP: NetPro, Joanne Carthey's eight year old firm, provides software that manages business-critical network services. The company is noted for its leadership in the management of directory services -- the central point of all network resources and other shared facilities on computer networks.**

Ms. Carthey comes from a family of entrepreneurs and always wanted to run her own business. She started NetPro out of her living room with two employees in 1991. Since then, the company has grown from \$250,000 in sales to almost \$10 million with nearly 90 employees. NetPro's customer list includes nearly 2,200 companies including Compaq, GTE, Nike, Sprint, Nissan, Citibank, Microsoft and Novell. The company's client list also includes federal, state and local governments, universities and businesses in 54 countries. Last year, NetPro also appeared in *Inc.* magazine's list of the 500 fastest-growing U.S. companies.

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In addition to the Small Business Persons of the Year, SBA honors other award winners during Small Business Week.

Entrepreneurial Success Award Winner: Wallace K. Tsuha, Saturn Electronics & Engineering, Inc., Auburn Hills, Mich.

Accountant Advocate of the Year: William L. Wong, William L. Wong CPA & Associates, Inc., Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Financial Services Advocate of the Year: Jeffrey M. Pollock, New Hampshire Business Development Corporation, Manchester, N.H.

Media Services Advocate of the Year: Jeannie M. Barnett, MBE Magazine, Torrance, Calif.

Minority Advocate of the Year: Richard S. Amador, CHARO Community Development Corporation, Los Angeles, Calif.

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Veteran Advocate of the Year: Major General Michael E. Dunlavey, Esq., Erie, Penn.

Women in Business Advocate of the Year: Vivian L. Shimoyama, Breakthru Unlimited, Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Small Business Exporter of the Year: Kristy Schloss, Schloss Engineering Equipment, Inc., Aurora, Colo.

SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year: Thomas M. Dunn, Jr., Dunn Lawn and Land, St. Louis, Mo.

National SCORE Chapters of the Year: Leonard Willner, South Palm Beach SCORE, Delray Beach, Fla.

National Welfare-to-Work Awards (honoring outstanding contributions to the Welfare-to-Work initiative):

- ***Entrepreneur of the Year***

Gale Walker, The Children of the Rainbow Daycare Center/Rainbow Arts Poject, San Diego, Calif.

- ***Small Business Owner of the Year***

George T. Johnson, Diversified Educational Training & Manufacturing Company, Inc., Wichita, Kan.

- ***SBA Associate of the Year***

Richard C. Petersen, Employment Trust, Inc., Portland, Maine

Phoenix Awards (honoring business owners and individuals who helped communities recover from natural disasters):

- ***Business Owner of the Year:*** Dalph McNeil, Brookville Mining Equipment Corporation, Brookville, Pa.

- ***Volunteer of the Year:*** Majorie Kesler, Gainesville, Ga.

- ***Public Official of the Year:*** Mayor Linda C. Wallin, Comfrey, Minn.

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*For more information on Small Business Week and a complete list of award winners, visit the SBA's Small Business Week Web site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>. Additional information about SBA programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov>. Or call the **SBA Answer Desk** at **1-800-U-ASK- SBA**.*

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